Verdict reserved on plea against ban on bird sale licences

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Monday reserved its verdict on a petition challenging the denial of licences for the sale of birds at the historic Tollinton Market.

Justice Chaudhry Iqbal heard the petition filed by Tollinton Market Traders Welfare Association through Advocate Azhar Siddique.

During the proceedings, the judge asked the petitioner's counsel about the notification imposing a ban on issuing licences for birds sale.

The counsel stated that all relevant departments and grievance committees had been approached, but only one notification was obtained. He said it seemed that the Supreme Court would be requested to provide that one notification under challenge.

The counsel argued that keeping and selling live birds is a fundamental right.

He asked the court to direct the department concerned to produce the official notification restricting such licences.

After hearing the arguments, the judge reserved its judgment on the maintainability of the petition in the absence of the impugned notification.

WILDLIFE: The Lahore High Court on Monday referred a petition to the wildlife department regarding the deaths of animals during an anti-encroachment operation at Bhati Chowk.

Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry heard the petition filed by an animal rights organisation.

Advocate Altamash Saeed, on behalf of the petitioner, argued that before demolishing the bird and animal market, the authorities failed to relocate the animals to a safe place. He said the demolishing operation resulted in the death of over a 1,000 animals and birds trapped under the debris.

He asked the court to seek a detailed report from the wildlife department on the deaths of the animals and birds. The judge directed the wildlife department to decide the matter within one month. — **Staff Reporter**

Punjab approves special courts for overseas Pakistanis

LAHORE: The Punjab government, in consultation with the Lahore High Court chief justice, approved the establishment of Special Courts for Overseas Pakistani Property under the Punjab Special Courts (Overseas Pakistani Property) Act 2025.

According to the official notification issued by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD), the district and additional district & sessions judges have been notified as special court judges across all 37 districts in the province.

These courts have been established to ensure speedy, transparent and effective justice for overseas Pakistanis in matters related to property disputes, illegal possessions and protection of ownership rights.

Overseas Pakistanis Commission, Punjab, vice-chairperson Barrister Amjad Malik says this initiative is a practical reflection of the Punjab government's vision to protect the legal rights, restore confidence in investment and uphold the civic rights of overseas Pakistanis.

He said the establishment of these courts would not only expedite the resolution of pending cases, but also strengthen legal action against land grabbers and open new avenues for foreign investment in the province.

He emphasised the Punjab government considers the overseas Pakistanis an integral part of national progress and remained committed to ensuring full protection of their rights. — Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Debris of the house after a cylinder explosion near Nadir Market, Harbanspura. — White Star

Three die, seven injured in roof collapse after gas explosion

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Three persons, including a child, were killed and seven others were injured when the roof of their house caved in after a gas explosion in Harbanspura on Monday.

Rescue 1122 received a call at 8am that the roof of a house collapsed after a cylinder blast on Pepsi Road. The rescuers found that the roof of the upper storey of the house had caved in and 10 people were trapped under it. There was a fire in the lower portion of the house.

The rescuers put the fire off, removed debris and pulled out 10 people, including children.

A woman and two children were found dead while seven others were injured. The deceased were identified as two-year-old Saim, 19-year-old Aftab and 55-year-Azra.

The injured were identified as Habib (16), Attiqa (16), Saba (20), Shehrbano (21), Arooj (24), Rukhsana (40), and Ishrat (50).

The injured persons were shifted to Mayo Hospital with burns and other injuries.

A rescue spokesperson said investigations revealed that the roof did not cave in due to a cylinder blast and it happened due to accumulation of gas in the house due to unknown reasons.

MURDER: A young woman was shot dead in a washroom allegedly by two men over unknown reasons in the Chuhng area two days ago.

According to the FIR, complainant Muhammad Saeed said a workshop mechanic, Naeem, was expelled from their shop over immoral activities. He said the suspect and his accomplice, Qasim, developed a grudge over the issue and went to the house of his brother Sarfraz.

The suspect climbed the wall of the house and entered the house. He said that his niece, Sehrish, was hiding in the washroom and the suspects shot her from the window.

Sehrish suffered three bullet injuries in the head, chest and back and died on the spot.

Chuhng police registered a murder case and started the investigation.

NCCIA official on judicial remand

LAHORE: A judicial magistrate at the district courts on Monday sent an assistant director of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) to jail on a judicial remand in a case of alleged misuse of authority and "extorting money" from an arrested YouTuber.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) produced the official, Shoaib Riaz, before the court on expiry of his two-day physical remand.

Other arrested NCCIA officials, including additional director Sarfraz Chaudhry, deputy director (acting in charge) Muhammad Zawar Ahmad, assistant director Mujtaba Zafar and sub-inspectors Ali Raza and Yasir Ramzan, were sent on judicial remand last week.— **Staff Reporter**

LHC seeks report on old banyan tree felling

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Justice Shahid Karim of the Lahore High Court on Monday observed that felling an old banyan tree outside a bakery in the Cantonment area is a "very unjust act," seeking a detailed report on the issue.

"It is beyond understanding who could order to cut an old tree," the judge regretted and directed a federal law officer to submit a detailed report on the matter.

While hearing petitions pertaining to environmental issues, the judge ordered Deputy Attorney General Asad Ali Bajwa to ensure implementation of the ban on tree felling in the areas falling under the jurisdiction of Cantonment and Walton boards as well.At the outset, Advocate Chaudhry Zulfiqar, a member of a judicial commission, told the court that the Road Transportation Authority (RTA) had issued letters to the environment department and the traffic police to start inspection of vehicles.

He pointed out that there was no mechanism for the surveillance of the vehicles after 11pm.

He said heavy traffic movement increases significantly after 11pm, contributing greatly to pollution. The city lacks a proper monitoring system for the heavy traffic, he regretted.

A counsel for the environment department informed the court that 46 checkpoints had been set up across Punjab and teams had been formed to take action against smoke-emitting vehicles.

He said vehicle inspections at Thokar Niaz Beg, where traffic enters the motorway, would begin immediately.

The judge directed the judicial commission members to inspect all points to ensure an effective monitoring of anti-smog actions.

Justice Karim remarked that the government and its departments woke up every October, repeat the old statements and then go silent. "If work had started in February or March, the public would not have been suffering due to smog to this extent today," he added.

Justice Karim said the environmental issues could not be solved within a month, as it required a permanent and sustainable planning.

He further noted, "Revenue cannot be generated by violating the law. Earning money at the expense of destroying parks' natural environment is illegal."

PADDLE COURTS: Justice Karim took exception to the construction of a paddle court and a restaurant in a public park in Ghalib Market, Gulberg, by the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA).

A counsel for the PHA tried to defend the authority's actions, saying it needs to generate revenue. However, the judge rejected the argument, maintaining that parks could not be utilised as a source of income in violation of the law.

Advocate Azhar Siddique, a counsel in a public interest petition, said the PHA mandate is only to maintain the parks, not generate revenue. He said that such activities in the public parks constitutes a criminal offence.

Justice Karim expressed his disdain for paddle courts in the public parks.

Justice Karim reminded the PHA's lawyer that the court had already issued rulings against restaurants in the public parks.

The judge also expressed his anger over installation of digital advertising boards, declaring them a source of traffic obstruction.

The judge would resume hearing on Nov 12.

41 more cases registered over air pollution

LAHORE: The Punjab Police registered 41 new cases against environmental violators as a part of ongoing campaign to control smog and reduce air pollution across the province, a spokesperson said on Monday.

The action was taken during the last 24 hours in various districts, including Lahore, where the violators were arrested.

The police spokesperson said that during these operations, 520 individuals were fined over Rs11,86,000 while 95 individuals were issued warnings. Violations reported included 115 cases of stubble burning, 242 cases of vehicles emitting excessive smoke, four of industrial activities and eight violations at brick kilns.

He added that during the current year, as a result of anti-smog crackdowns across Lahore and other districts, a total of 2,332 cases were registered and 2,053 lawbreakers were arrested. During this period, 88,300 individuals were fined over Rs220m while 11,363 individuals were issued warnings. The violations included 1,284 cases of crop residue burning, 53,051 cases of vehicle emissions, 1,391 cases related to industrial activities and 2,077 cases at brick kilns.

Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar has instructed the officers concerned to further accelerate anti-smog crackdowns on highways, in the industrial areas, agricultural lands and other locations. He emphasized that immediate and strict action should be taken against those violating smog SOPs.

Concurrently, Punjab Safe Cities Authority is taking measures to combat air pollution in Lahore and other districts across the province.

With the help of modern cameras and drones, the Safe Cities Authority identified over 540 environmental violations in the last two days. Action was taken against 283 smoke-emitting vehicles through Safe City cameras, and fines were issued.

During the period, five locations of stubble burning and 10 industrial activities emitting smoke were also identified and reports were promptly sent to the departments concerned for action. — **Staff Reporter**

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